



**For Immediate Release**

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

## **SENATOR BROWN FLOOR SPEECH HONORING CAPITOL WORKERS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVER**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the year since that dark day, we’ve learned more about all that those officers endured from the terrorists who stormed the Capital – the racist slurs, the physical abuse, the mental injuries.

We now know that things were so much worse than they appeared in the original reporting, as more and more details have come out:

These terrorists gouged someone’s eyes out, they killed a Capitol Police Officer and injured 140 others, they threatened to kill the Vice President, they brought a noose to the Capitol and paraded symbols of white supremacy like the Confederate flag, they brought equipment to take hostages.

And it wasn’t only Capitol Police Officers who endured this attack and put their lives on the line serving our republic on January 6th.

Workers throughout the Capitol risked everything that day – including workers that too often don’t get noticed, like the Capitol’s support staff.

Every day, Capitol janitorial, maintenance, and other essential workers do their jobs with skill and dedication and dignity.

They have shown up for work during this pandemic, for nearly two years.

And those workers were here on January 6th doing their jobs when insurrectionists stormed this building, barging into this chamber, acting as though no one could ever possibly hold them accountable for their violence and disregard for our values and our laws.

And when their rampage was over, it was the largely Black and brown custodians and maintenance workers who were left to restore dignity to the Capitol.

Their work allowed us to continue ours that night, certifying the electoral votes and securing our democracy.

Domestic terrorists destroyed.

Black and brown custodians cleaned up.

And maintenance workers, carpenters, and painters – many of them union members – rebuilt.

Today, we honor them.

Some of the most enduring, moving images of that day are the pictures of these workers sweeping up the mess these terrorists made in the people's house.

That's what service looks like. That's what love of country looks like. That's what the Dignity of Work looks like.

And it tells you a lot about what's wrong with our economy that this building's essential workers – like so many of their fellow service workers around the country – don't make a lot of money and don't have much power.

We simply don't value and respect ALL work the way we should.

I think of the words of Dr. King:

“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.’”

Dr. King continued: “No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance.”

Or look at the words of Pope Francis a few days ago, in his Christmas Eve address – he said, “God reminds us of the importance of granting dignity to men and women through labour, but also of granting dignity to human labour itself.”

No work is insignificant. All labor has dignity.

We ought to treat it that way – starting with honoring these workers.

Last year, I joined Chair Klobuchar and my colleagues on a resolution to honor all the workers who risked their lives that day – custodians, maintenance workers, Capitol police officers, journalists, the floor staff, the workers in our offices.

All of them serve this country. All of them risk their safety to preserve our democracy. All of them deserve our gratitude.

Today, though, I ask my colleagues to join me and Chair Klobuchar, Leader Schumer, and Senators Casey and Booker in a resolution honoring the Capitol's janitorial and maintenance staff—all essential workers for their bravery and their service to our country on January 6th.

This resolution reaffirms the Senate's commitment to strengthening their rights as workers, by providing support and resources to ensure their health, well-being, safety, and protection from further attacks.

That support should include higher pay, collective bargaining rights, paid sick and vacation leave, and comprehensive health insurance with mental health resources.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me – not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Americans, and as members of this body.

These workers serve all of us. They allowed us to do our work for the American people that night – and every day before, and every day since.

This building wouldn't function without them. And no one should have to endure what they did, at the hands of domestic terrorists.

To all of the Capitol custodians and service workers who come to work in this building each day, to ensure our democracy functions: thank you, thank you, thank you.

###